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C2N28THE NEED FOR MORE CRITICAL THINKING OF  
WHAT IS ACTUALLY ACCOMPLISHED IN EXTENSION

## I. How can Extension Education be measured?

## A. Changes in behavior of people.

1. Changes in skills or things done.
2. " " knowledge or things known.
3. " " attitudes or things felt.
4. " " behavior such as problem solving,  
making adjustments, ability in thinking.

## B. Major problems in an evaluation program.

1. Clarification of the educational objectives.
2. Devising valid, reliable, practical and simple methods  
of measuring these changes in behavior.

II. The annual statistical-report form calls for the enumeration of  
activities of extension agents.

## A. Activities such as:

1. Meetings.
2. Personal contacts such as office calls, farm-and-home  
visits.
3. Leaflets and bulletins distributed.
4. Result demonstrations established.

B. These are satisfactory evidences of activities, but not  
evidences of changes in behavior.III. The annual statistical-report form calls for the enumeration of  
improved practices adopted.A. Adoption of improved practices is an excellent measure of  
progress. Practices are not only valuable for their own  
sake but we can be fairly certain that if a person adopts  
a practice he has learned at least one thing, or has  
changed at least one attitude or both.B. The annual statistical-report form tends to control and  
limit the thinking of the agents who make the reports.  
It has considerable influence on the Extension program.C. Extension Service workers frequently become worried and  
in doubt as to whether they are accomplishing the major  
objectives. This uncertainty may cause them to work on  
activities which give tangible results although they may  
be less important.

Extension workers may devote their time to improved prac-  
tices because the adoption of these by large numbers of  
people serves as evidence of something accomplished. Too  
much attention upon them may actually hinder the educa-  
tional program.

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- D. Economic measures were very important in the establishment of the extension programs in the past when agents had to prove the value of their work in dollars and cents.

IV. Every good extension plan should provide for measurement of intangible as well as tangible accomplishments.

- A. Through the years we have recorded in our annual narrative reports some evidences of achievement through success stories - case histories - and similar presentations.
- B. We need to give more critical thinking about what is actually accomplished and the use of a variety of evaluation techniques. Information learned and practices accomplished are still given importance.
- C. Development of attitudes, appreciations, ability in thinking, problem-solving, judgment, confidence, and self-reliance are equally valuable. Define each.

V. How does an Evaluation program in extension differ from an Evaluation program in the schools?

- A. Extension does not give a formal program of studies for a group of pupils of the same age, who give compulsory attendance.
- B. Extension work is voluntary. Those who participate do so because of fundamental needs and interests.
- C. Extension holds relatively few meetings. Participants differ greatly in amount of formal schooling, in age, and in income. Potential clientele of Extension is large -- all rural farm and all rural nonfarm. The total number of rural people participating in all phases of extension activities is large.
- D. Schools have had a good program of testing information learned. More recently they have measured skills, attitudes, and aptitudes but they have not had an adequate program for measuring what students actually do as a result of teaching. Extension has encouraged "learning by doing" and has found out what people have actually done as a result of extension teaching.
- E. An extension Evaluation program needs to keep in mind the fundamental characteristics of extension.
  - 1. That we work in a subject-matter field.
  - 2. That we are concerned with the education of adults and youth.
  - 3. That we are concerned with the development of rural people.
  - 4. That we work with people in life situations and who are engaged in practical farm and home pursuits.